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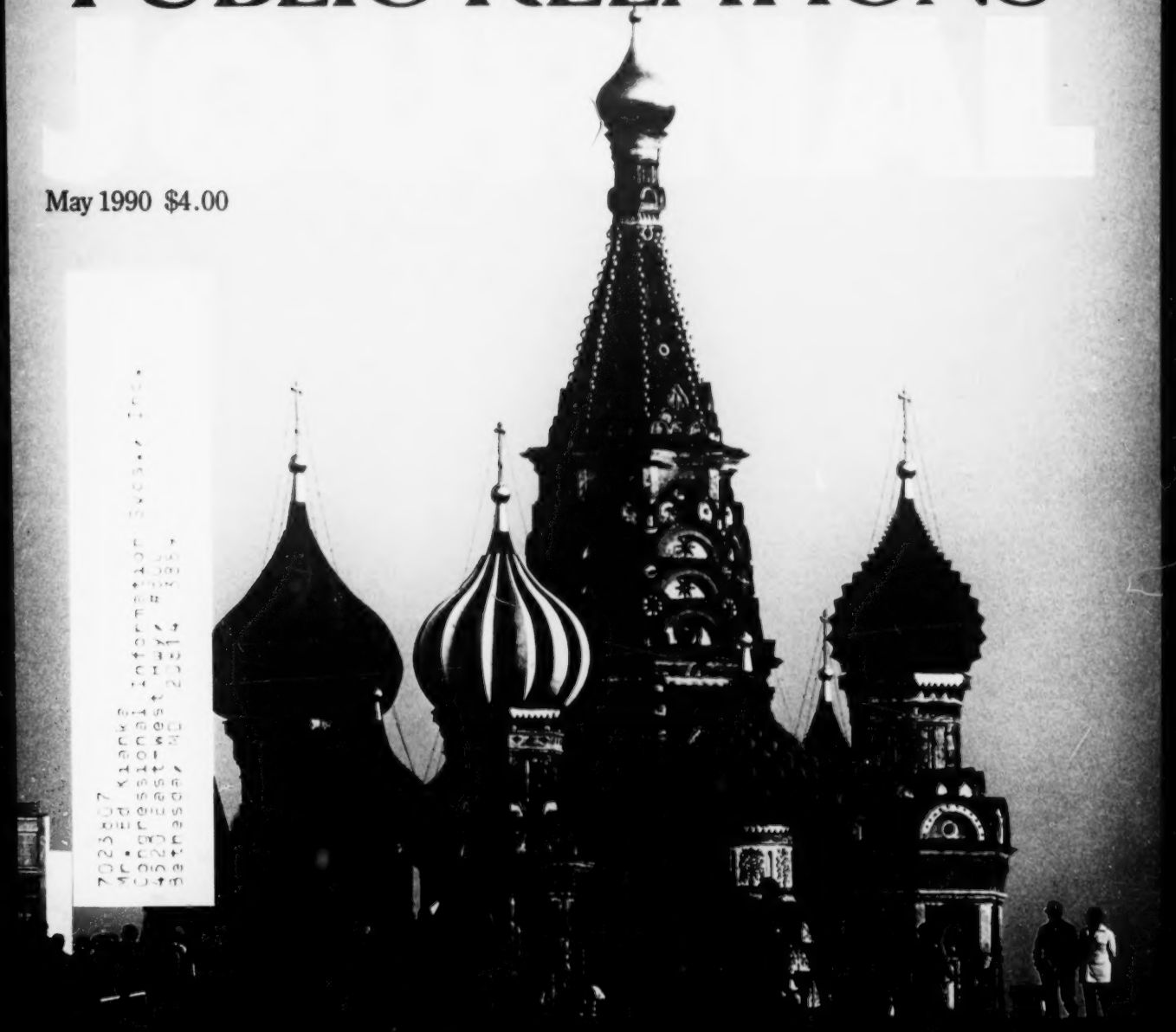

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

...in the U.S.

...new Eastern Europe...

Freelance Travel Expenses: Who Pays?

PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

May 1990 Vol. 46 No. 5

FEATURES

17 Why Marketing Directors Are Listening Now
After years of skepticism, more companies are turning to public relations pros for marketing strategies—and advertising agencies are talking "integrated marketing." A marketing public relations pro discusses results of a recent poll of independent firms done for *PRJ* and what's behind the shift in thinking.
Aaron D. Cushman, APR

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20 Back in the U.S.S.R. —and Eastern Europe
The shredding of the Iron Curtain means new opportunities for practitioners specializing in travel, as U.S. tourists flock to the "New Europe" and the U.S.S.R. But it may be a bit premature to start counting your rubles...
Edmund Antrobus

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27 Travel Writers' Expenses: Who Should Pay? *Opinion*
More newspapers and travel publications are adopting policies of refusing articles whose writers' travel expenses have been subsidized by destination hosts. One travel practitioner argues that the trend may hurt everyone—including the readers who are potential tourists.
Mac Seligman

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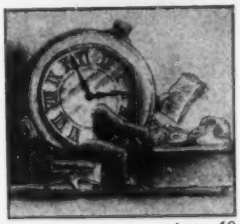

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Cover art: *Pete Turner/The Image Bank*

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Rebecca Newman

Expanding horizons in travel, marketing

Public relations practitioners specializing in travel and tourism have never been more active. Domestically, travel expenditures increased by $64 billion between 1985 and 1988, to total $309 billion. Last year, 1.3 billion people travelled within the United States, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center, a nonprofit center for national and tourism research. Travel and tourism is the third-largest industry in the country (behind automotive dealers and food stores), and some predict that it may be in first place by the end of this decade, reports Scott Dring, media relations assistant for the center.

Internationally, one of the most interesting new aspects of the travel boom is the recent jump in U.S. tourist and business travel to Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. *(page 20)*. While potential revenue from this region is still limited, practitioners who have gotten their feet wet say they're enjoying the challenges and are optimistic about greater opportunities ahead.

As travel and tourism coverage has expanded in the media, the issue of who pays for travel writers' expenses has been coming up more and more. Mac Seligman, a seasoned travel practitioner who has grappled with the dilemma over the years, discussed the topic with editors, freelance travel writers and public relations people specializing in travel – in all, more than 40 interviews – as research for the opinion piece starting on page 27. As he notes, an increasing number of publications, concerned with possible conflicts of interest in travel coverage, are instituting policies against accepting any articles that result from trips subsidized by destinations. Whether or not you agree with his conclusions, the subject is one that warrants open discussion. We'll be looking forward to your feedback.

Another area, marketing public relations, is also experiencing a major upsurge in activity. Aaron D. Cushman reports *(page 17)* that firms throughout the country are being approached by organizations that have previously relied almost exclusively on advertising and direct mail. The signs are particularly heartening to all of those practitioners out there who have been trying to get the message across to marketing directors for many years. If you'd like to share your own marketing expertise in our Marketing Public Relations column, drop us a line.

As a result of more turmoil on the Tokyo Stock Exchange after we went to press with April, the TSE is no longer the "world's single-largest equities marketplace," as we indicated in the cover story, "An End to the Yen to List?" Noting the acceleration of the plunge, one IR executive who'd been interviewed for the piece remarked, "Well, securities markets are dynamic. That's the risk..."

Karlene Lukovitz, Editor

PRSA Public Relations Society of America
33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003
(212) 995-2230

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is an individual membership professional society of 14,983 public relations practitioners. Its major services to members include programs of Professional Development and Accreditation, an Information Center, publications, tracking of issues of national concern, and promotion of ethical practice through adherence to PRSA's "Code of Professional Standards." PRSA's mission is "To serve the public need for understanding and cooperation among its diverse interests by fostering high professional and ethical standards for all those practicing public relations."

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Los Angeles-based firm that produces and distributes VNRs. Cost savings, she adds, can be best maximized only when it makes "good sense" to produce a VNR.

For example, Rowland shot a VNR at an interior decorating trade show for its client, Decorate-It! Inc., Woodlands, California. After the newsworthiness faded, the footage, which featured the client's new wall decoration for children, was later re-edited into a sales video.

Movies and public TV

Other companies have also found an outlet for their films on public broadcasting TV stations. Mercedes-Benz, for example, celebrated the centennial of the automobile in 1986 by producing a film entitled, "The Automobile," which was picked up by PBS for its 300 affiliates.

Documentation on videotape need not be limited to a one-time event. Ongoing activities can also work well as videos for distribution to either a general audience or specialized market. Kraft's boat ride at the Epcot Center is one of the major shows at The Land pavilion. Kraft decided "to share the exciting educational elements of The Land with more young people" by producing and distributing an 18-minute film to junior and senior high schools, according to Kathy Knuft, a Kraft spokesperson. The film, "Food for the Future," teaches students about food crops and agricultural technologies that may someday feed the Earth's growing population. In the three years since its distribution, the film has been shown to nearly 775,000 students. □

CEOs say they neglect employee communications

While acknowledging that communicating on a regular basis with rank-and-file employees improves worker performance and the bottom line, most CEOs of top U.S. companies say they're still not spending enough time on employee communications.

A recent nationwide survey of Fortune 500 CEOs (164 responded), conducted by the management consulting firm A. Foster Higgins & Co., Inc., reveals that CEOs, on average, now spend 18.6 percent of their time communicating with employees. Ideally, CEOs say they would like to devote about one-fourth of their time to this function.

"Clearly, CEOs recognize their leadership role in communicating with employees and the enormous potential impact of that communication," says Richard J. Knapp, principal at Foster Higgins, New York. "But there's a gap between how CEOs want to act and how they actually behave." Almost nine out of 10 CEOs (87 percent) said other demands preclude them from spending more time on employee communications. □

CEOs assess their employee communications impact

Source: A. Foster Higgins & Co., Inc.

Percentages of CEOs citing positive impact on four factors.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION ARE ONLY *PART* OF THE VNR PICTURE

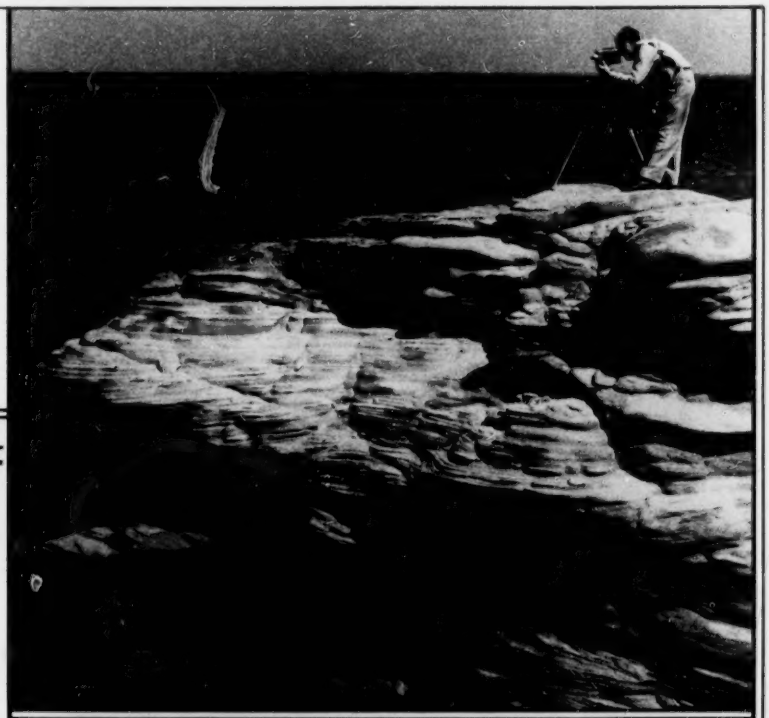
TELEVISION SPECIALISTS FOR 20 YEARS

DWJ

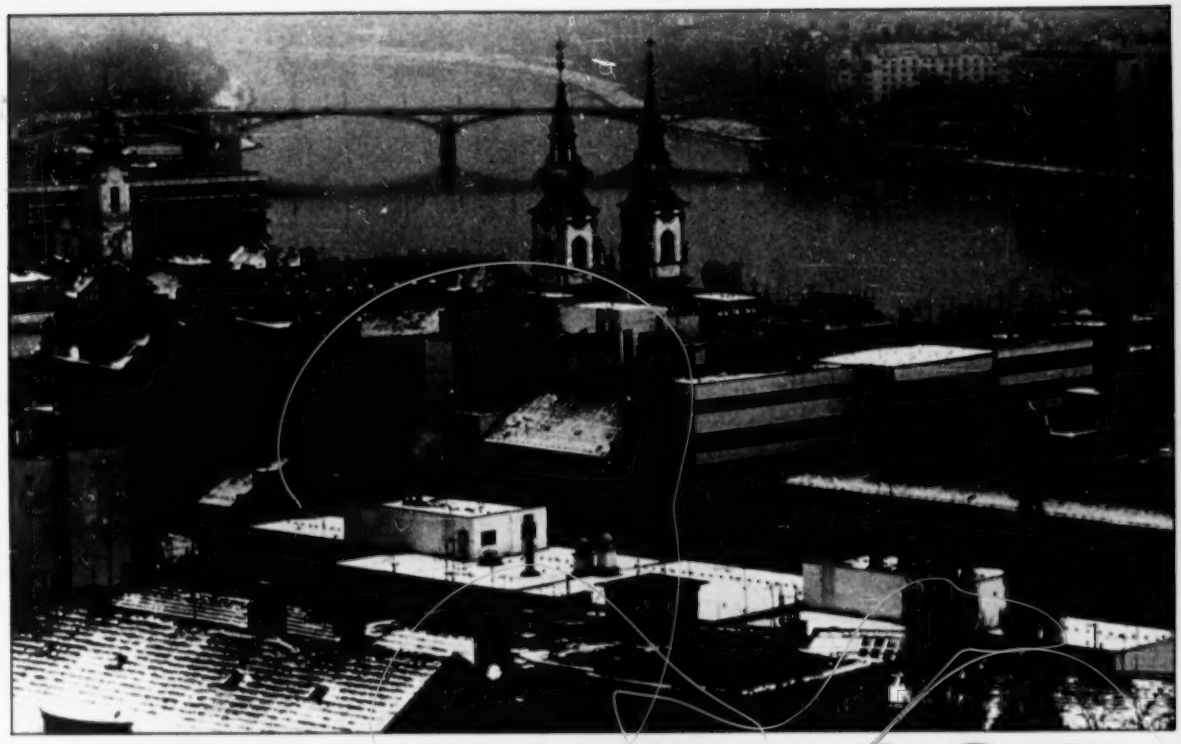
16 East 65th Street
New York, NY 10022
(212) 684-4000

1730 Rhode Island Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 457-0884

2730 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 620
Santa Monica, CA 90403
(213) 828-0993



GET THE WHOLE PICTURE



BACK IN THE U.S.S.R.

AND EASTERN EUROPE

For practitioners specializing in travel, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union represent intriguing "new" destinations and opportunities

EDMUND ANTROBUS

Last year, the travel public relations firm of Karen Weiner Escalera surveyed international tourist directors about which region and nation would experience the greatest growth in tourism from the United States over the next decade. Given the thaw in relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R., they weren't particularly surprised to find that 36 percent named Eastern Europe as the number one growth region and the Soviet Union as the top growth country.

But even travel practitioners have been surprised by just how *much* Eastern European tourism has snowballed since last year. Calls made in March of this year to various embassies in Washington revealed that *twice* as many Americans are applying for visas to the Soviet Union and certain Eastern European countries as applied in 1989. The embassy people say they can hardly keep up with the issuances. The U.S.S.R., the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and Czechoslovakia are all projecting nearly 100 percent increases in tourism over last year. Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia each have had 70 to 80 percent increases.

Brave new world

A "new" travel destination is a rare opportunity for public relations practitioners specializing in travel. With a part of Europe largely dismissed by most American tourists for 40 years coming on line, new travel accounts beckon, as well as an opportunity to participate in international bridge-building.

And, self-interest aside, practitioners point out that the countries in question have a great deal to gain from the increase in tourism.

While United States citizens have by and large avoided this part of the world, many Eastern bloc countries have continued to enjoy a steady and sizeable stream of other tourists. Bulgaria has almost seven million visitors annually, only 20,000 of whom are from the United States. Czechoslovakia draws 17 million tourists, of which only 80,000 are American. And Hungary, a marvelous tourist country that has more visitors than population (10 million compared to 15 million), welcomes only about 120,000 American tourists each year. Other countries in the region report similar numbers.

As of this year, that is clearly changing. The Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union may well see more American tourists this year than ever before. And as more hotels open and air service expands, their numbers will continue to grow. Some

Scenes of historic beauty commingle with signs of economic stress and rapid change in Eastern Europe: An aerial view of Budapest; farmers selling meat in open air market in Poland; Hungarians meet Ronald McDonald. All photos were taken by Black Star, which recently expanded into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to service U.S. corporations with operations in the area.

predict that 1991 will be an even better year than 1990.

Four target groups

Still, just how promising is this area for U.S. practitioners seeking to expand their client bases? To assess that, you need to look at what kinds of groups are visiting now, the status of the infrastructure in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., the funding of tourism boards in these countries, and the special sales points that make the areas ripe for growth.

In part, the situation is reminiscent of the early 1950s, when European travel demand, pent up during World War II, burst forth in a wave of American tourists. Now, with the breaking down of the Berlin Wall, Americans who have longed to visit friends and relatives in Eastern Europe can readily realize their dream. Although hard statistics about tourism in this rapidly changing destination area are still hard to obtain, the embassies say that it seems clear that these so-called "ethnic travelers" are the largest single group accounting for the new influx.

The second-largest and rapidly growing group consists of business travelers seeking opportunity in a region where business practices and markets are at last being liberalized. The simultaneous shredding of the Iron Curtain and the emerging European Economic Community offer a wealth of possibilities that need to be quickly assessed.

There are also the tourists who are going out of sheer curiosity and a desire to experience a small part of the historic change as democracy sweeps through the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. "One of our major themes is that one can be a witness to history," says Linda Kundell, associate director of Herman Associates, a public relations firm that represents U.S.-based Trafalgar Tours. Trafalgar recently doubled its departures to the Soviet Union and offers tours encompassing Eastern Europe.

And then there are the "sophisticated travelers." These perennial travelers are eager to experience the art, music and folk culture in the *new* Europe: Eastern Europe.

"I just did an update on Prague, explaining what's new, that was picked up by a number of publications," says Betty Vaughn, who has handled various projects for CEDOK, the Czechoslovakian tourist agency, for the past 16 years, as well as for Bulgaria, the Soviet Union and a Polish tour operator. "It covered everything from new types of beer to spas to how to get from

"AN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY"

Gary Tobin, vice president, public affairs, U.S., for American Express Travel Related Services, has been involved with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union since 1988, when he went to the Soviet Union to help establish that country's first automated teller machines for American Express. (American Express cards are now accepted at 1,000 outlets in the U.S.S.R.)

American Express is currently the only U.S.-based travel agency with an office in the Soviet Union, aside from the state-owned INTOURIST. The travel company has long-standing relationships with 40 state-owned travel agencies throughout the Eastern bloc region, as well as an office in Moscow staffed by Soviet citizens and managed by an American. Tobin assists as liaison among governments, agencies and businesses on both sides, working on special projects as varied as bringing American MBA candidates over to meet with Soviet officials and sponsoring the Moscow Circus tour in this country.

In Tobin's view, there's no doubt that the U.S.S.R. and Eastern bloc countries present opportunities for U.S. public relations practitioners in the travel field and other specialties. But he stresses that any firm looking at the area must think in terms of long-term benefits rather than short-term payoffs. "It's an investment opportunity," he says.

"If making money now is your primary goal, you'd have to conclude, after weighing the pros and cons, that the risks outweigh the opportunities," he says. Because of the scarcity of hard currency—particularly American dollars—payment requires negotiation. "You can trade for goods, you can take rubles—but the currency won't do you any good outside of the country—or you can keep your money in the country and hope that they will at some point build or make something that you want to buy," Tobin explains.

The competition for what business exists is intense. "There are maybe six million 'companies' to serve and three million entrepreneurs over there trying to figure out how to make money," Tobin says, adding that the British, Scandinavians and Japanese have a decided jump on the market.

Although U.S. tourism to the area is growing rapidly, "we could double and triple our numbers over there several times" and still not catch up to the influx from other Western European countries, Tobin notes.

Firms and companies that do venture into the tourism market must be aware that there is severe economic hardship in every country, that the English language is rarely spoken outside of major cities, and that, in addition to the scarcity of accommodations and relative scarcity of airline service, business tools taken for granted here are rare commodities in the U.S.S.R. and many Eastern bloc countries. "Making calls within the Soviet Union is relatively easy if you have the phone numbers you need, but trying to call out of the country is difficult," Tobin reports. "There are few fax or answering machines, and copying machines were restricted until recently."

In addition, travel arrangements tend to be rigid. The difficulty in dealing with a particular country depends on how Westernized and open it has been in recent years; Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia are less rigid, while East Germany and Romania have been quite inflexible.

The Soviet media—including the television network, which is "relatively easy to work with," according to Tobin, are receptive to covering U.S. companies if the approach is educational. "They want to educate people about capitalism," he says. "We worked with McDonald's, and found the media open to covering, for example, how to use a fast food chain."

Even with all of the challenges, "If you have any intention of doing so, now is the time to begin building relationships," Tobin advises. "In some countries, it may be too late; in others, it probably isn't. It's important to establish relationships, because they'll remember you later as having been willing to be there when it was still difficult. And your connections there may well enhance your reputation and bring you accounts in other countries."

Moreover, Tobin says, "Communications is an incredibly important part of all that's going on now in these countries. You'll be able to look back and say that, within your own specialty, you participated in the biggest political story of the decade—possibly of the entire 20th century."—*KL*

here to there." Noting that U.S. publications serving sophisticated audiences have been very receptive to Eastern European stories of late, Vaughn cites an article about the mansions and castles of Czechoslovakia that was written by a *House & Garden* editor and run in that publication's "Home Furnishings" section.

She's now promoting a casino in Czechoslovakia, as well as planning a video for travel agents, tour operators and public sale that will feature Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. "You want to show a little romance and feature some major sights and good restaurants," she says.

Similarly, Herman Associates is wooing the jet-set crowd with events like luncheons at New York's Russian Tea Room.

No conflict of interest

Practitioners interested in tapping the Eastern bloc's potential for new clients should initially look to the tourist boards of individual Eastern European countries—both for direct project work and for leads as to which companies serve the region and might be open to hiring publicists. *(See "The Search for Clients," page 24.)*

Sophisticated travelers who've been to Western Europe several times are eager to experience the "new" Europe

These tourist boards are state-owned, with the exception of Hungary's, which is partially state-owned and about to be listed on the Viennese stock exchange.

Several of the boards are virtual giants. Czechoslovakia's CEDOK ranks among the 10 largest in the world. It employs 15,000 people, has 163 branches and has sent its representatives to 18 countries throughout the world. It has a system of 150 Interhotels, 48 motor coaches, 15 minibuses, and access to 9,000 guides, who speak 16 languages.

CEDOK has its own public relations and advertising departments. But anything its U.S. office can't do itself, or the home office can't supply, is assigned to public relations firms willing to work on a project basis.

There is no "conflict of interest" consideration. The outside public relations people can do work for as many countries as they wish. "It's not like working for Western Europe or the Caribbean in this respect," explains Vaughn. "No retainer fee is paid; just payment by the job. Nevertheless, we regard them as our regular clients. We contact them or they contact us

THE SEARCH FOR CLIENTS
Where to begin

The following are the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Eastern European and Soviet Union tourist agencies and airlines with offices in the United States. Contacting them can be a first step in looking for clients.

BULGARIA

National tourist office
Balkan Holidays/USA/Ltd.
161 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 722-1110

National carrier
Balkan Airline
c/o Balkan Holidays
161 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 722-1110

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

National tourist office
CEDOK, Czechoslovak Travel Bureau
10 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016
(212) 689-9720

National carrier
CSA-Czechoslovak Airlines
545 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10106
(212) 682-5833

HUNGARY

National tourist office
IBUSZ Hungarian Travel Company
One Parker Place, Suite 1104
Fort Lee, NJ 07024
(201) 592-8585

National carrier
MALEV Hungarian Airlines
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10111
(212) 757-6760

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (EAST GERMANY)

National tourist office
REISEBÜRO der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik General direktion PSF 77, DDR-1026 Berlin, GDR /2/2150. There is no U.S. office. Tourists can make arrangements to visit East Germany through those officially accredited by the Reisebüro der D.D.R., among them:
Koch Travel
157 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 369-3800

National carrier
None.

POLAND

National tourist office
Polish National Tourist Office
333 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 236-9013

National carrier
LOT Polish Airlines
500 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10110
(212) 944-8116

SOVIET UNION

National tourist office
INTOURIST
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10111
(212) 757-3884

National Carrier
AEROFLOT
630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 341
New York, NY 10111
(212) 397-1660
or:
1604 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 429-4922

YUGOSLAVIA

National tourist office
Yugoslav National Tourist Office
630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 280
New York, NY 10111
(212) 757-2801

National carrier
JAT Yugoslav Airlines
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10111
(212) 765-4050

ROMANIA

National tourist office
Romanian National Tourist Office
573 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 697-6971

National carrier
TAROM Romanian Airlines
200 East 38th Street
New York, NY 10016
(212) 687-6013

if a particular job has to be done."

"Some of my best jobs have come about as a result of one country recommending me to another," says L. Hamlyn Hobden, head of a Montreal-based firm that frequently works for Eastern European countries and the U.S.S.R. His client list includes CSA, the Czech airline, as well as Aeroflot, the Soviet national carrier, which indicates that airlines don't object to this practice, either.

Projects involve writing special press releases and trade publication advertising copy and organizing press tours, press lunches and trade shows.

Medals—but limited funds

While not having to worry about conflicts of interest is refreshing, one of the big problems in cultivating travel business related to the Eastern bloc and the U.S.S.R. is a lack of funds.

On one hand, there's no doubt that public relations is valued in these countries. With little hard currency available for advertising, many of them have relied very heavily on public relations for years now.

And, to show their appreciation, many give honors and awards to outstanding public relations practitioners. Hobden, for example, received a medal from the U.S.S.R. for his work for INTOURIST, the Soviet travel agency. He was also awarded two medals by Czechoslovakia—a silver for promoting Expo '67, a world's fair held in Prague just prior to the Russian invasion, and a gold for recent work.

T. Vagi Associates of Hartsdale, New York, works almost exclusively for Hungarian travel accounts. Vagi's best client is IBUSZ, the Hungarian government travel agency. He works out of his home but has seven people to whom he subcontracts. Among many other assignments, he writes a newsletter, "IBUSZ News," every two months for travel agents and the travel media. Born in Hungary, he has been a U.S. resident since 1956, and has the essentials for someone in his position: an intimate knowledge of the "product" coupled with an expert's knowledge of U.S. media.

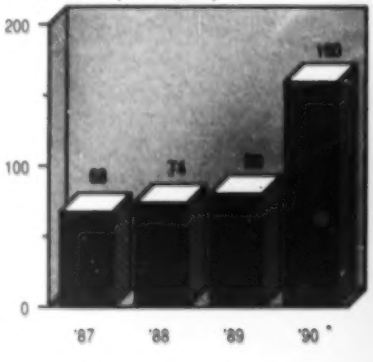
Since Hungary entertained about 7,000 American travel agents at the 58th American Society of Travel Agents World Congress in Budapest in 1988, it has been remarkably successful in drawing visitors. It has also gotten considerably more media attention in the past few years. (Just this past January, *Travel & Leisure* ran a 15-page article on Hungary.)

For his work on the ASTA meeting and his ongoing media relations and other tourism development projects, Vagi has received several awards from the Hungarian government.

But practitioners cannot live on glory alone. "The thing that one has to understand is that these countries don't have big budgets to promote themselves," says Kundell. "Governments are changing and there's a lot of instability. Whoever is running the show today might not be there tomorrow."

Kundell and others note that large retainers are virtually nonexistent. "PR firms are not going to make their fortunes right now in Eastern Europe," she says. "There aren't big fees to be made." Budgets and bureaucracy can cause frustration for U.S. public relations pros. "If you told an Eastern European tourist operator that you were sending the most famous travel editor, they'd probably have the nerve to say,

U.S. visitors to Czechoslovakia 1987–1990 (In thousands)



*projected
Source: Czechoslovakian National Tourist Office.

U.S. visitors to Czechoslovakia will actually double this year, according to the country's national tourist office. Since 1987, the flow has increased by 135 percent. Though hard numbers are difficult to come by, East Germany, the Soviet Union and other countries in the region confirm that U.S. tourism is very much on the rise this year.

'Sorry, but we don't have the budget,'" Vaughn laments. With hard currency tight and the low value of the ruble and other Eastern European currencies, methods of payment must be negotiated. *(See "An Investment Opportunity," page 22.)*

In addition to scarce funds, the constant coverage of the political events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union may, for the present, be working against practitioners seeking new business. "These countries have been getting so much play in the world press that a full-fledged publicity blitz isn't required," says Kundell. "Actually," agrees Vaughn, "I'm less valuable to them now that they're getting a lot of free press."

"Right now, promotion efforts are almost completely product-oriented," says another travel specialist. "It's press releases on airfares, available tours, hotels, meals and sightseeing information."

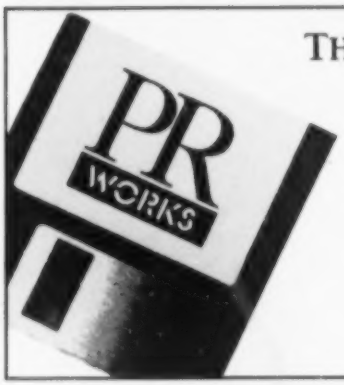
Are they ready?

Then there's the other concern of U.S. practitioners vis a vis Eastern Europe: Is it too early to encourage travel there? Is the necessary infrastructure in place?

To the question, "Is Eastern Europe ready for this influx?" Miroslaw Nalazek, chairman of the Eastern Europe Travel Board, answers a flat yes. His EETB has been formed to encourage North Americans to explore the "other" Europe. "For years," he says, "tourist boards and tour operators have been involved in building new first-class hotels, upgrading existing hotels and organizing tours that link up countries in the region. And airlines have stepped up service to make it easier to get there from the United States."

But U.S. practitioners warn colleagues looking into the client possibilities, as well as tourists themselves, not to expect too much just yet. "There is a tremendous amount of interest in Eastern Europe, but the infrastructure is extremely limited," says Kundell. "Many countries don't have the ability to handle the influx. You have to sell the American public on being more realistic about the sub-par accommodations. Although it's just one part of the equation, PR can be helpful in easing the fears of travelers."

Moreover, because of the sudden demand, many countries are finding it tough to fill the demand for rooms – whatever their quality. Dorothy Furman, president of Furman Communications, a Los Angeles public relations firm whose clients include DER Tours, an East German tour operator, confirms that hotel space is very limited in East Germany at present. DER Tour President Heinz Niederhoff, she says, is warning individuals and groups to book hotel reservations far



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in advance, and is predicting that the crunch won't abate for another 16 to 20 months, when new construction now underway is completed. (Much of Furman's work for DER Tours centers on positioning Niederhoff as an expert on East Germany and a spokesperson for the country.)

Special interest bonanza

Still, the region has many built-in sales points, and can only get more popular and well-visited as economies stabilize and accommodations improve.

Escalera and others believe that specialized interest travel is the single biggest growth area in Eastern Europe and provides the best placement opportunities for travel publicists.

"History buffs can explore a 15th century Bohemian town in Czechoslovakia or visit the manor in East Germany where the Potsdam Agreement was signed, sealing the postwar fate of modern Germany," she notes. "Health enthusiasts can luxuriate in a deluxe spa along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast; Roman Catholics can follow in the footsteps of Pope John Paul II in Poland; wine lovers can explore the vineyards of the Danube; sportsmen can hunt stags, wild boar and every kind of field and water fowl in the woods, marshes and plains of Romania."

Press trips, she says, can effectively adopt these themes rather than using an approach that applies too broad a brush to Eastern Europe.

"Special interest magazines are good prospects for placing this type of story," Escalera adds, "and are usually more open to suggestions from public relations people than are general interest publications." Another plus, she says, is that this type of magazine is less likely to have a policy that prevents it from using material from media trips subsidized by the destinations. *(See following article "Travel Writers' Expenses: Who Should Pay?")*

Bargains abound

Eastern Europe's comparative inexpensiveness is an important selling point. Whereas high prices in some Western European countries make people stay away, the dollar is still holding its own in the east. Low prices are the reason that seven million people vacation in Bulgaria each year. A double room in a four-star hotel in the off-season costs $38, including breakfast. A two-week stay in one of the luxurious Black Sea resorts begins at $1,045, including airfare, American Plan accommodations and medical treatment.

Yugoslavia is not a member of the Warsaw Pact and likes to think of itself as being part of Central rather than Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, U.S. perception puts it in the east. It, too, has easily publicized bargains. Three years ago, for example, Herman Associates arranged a press tour to Yugoslavia for the Yugoslavian National Tourist office. One part of the tour was visiting the ski slopes where the World Winter Games had been held. Out of this came a story, run in several U.S. newspapers and travel magazines, about an amazingly low-priced offer being made to American skiers. Including the round-trip airfare from New York, two meals a day, and eight days in a hotel at the foot of an Olympic ski run, you could ski in Yugoslavia for only $704 – less than you would pay to ski in most any U.S. ski resort, where there would not be the added attraction of an exotic locale to explore. That was in 1987. The price has gone up about $150, but it's still a bargain.

In the final analysis, U.S. practitioners say that it may be hard for firms that have never had business in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union to crack the market right now. But, they stress, it's definitely an area to watch.

"I don't think that they'll ever have the enormous tourism budgets of England or France, but I do think that the money devoted to public relations will increase, if current interest in Eastern Europe continues," says Vaughn. "Now, with everything opening up, I think Eastern European governments are going to allocate more and more money to their tourism offices," agrees Furman.

And, thanks to the political changes going on, once you have a client, doing the work is a breeze in comparison to what it was only a few months ago. "In the past, public relations firms that serviced Eastern Europe tended to keep a low profile," says one practitioner. "But now, you can be much more forthright with your programs. Now, people *want* to hear about Eastern Europe. At this point, someone with a new client will have a heck of an easier time getting business for that client. At this time last year, you would have had to go through a much more extended educational process in selling the area to anyone."

Edmund Antrobus has been a full-time freelance writer since 1978, and has written three books and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles on travel and related subjects. Born in England, he has lived in the United States most of his life, and now resides in Leonia, New Jersey. He left magazine journalism in 1962 to become the director of public relations for the British Tourist Authority, and continued in that position for 16 years. He received a Silver Anvil in 1964 for work with the BTA.